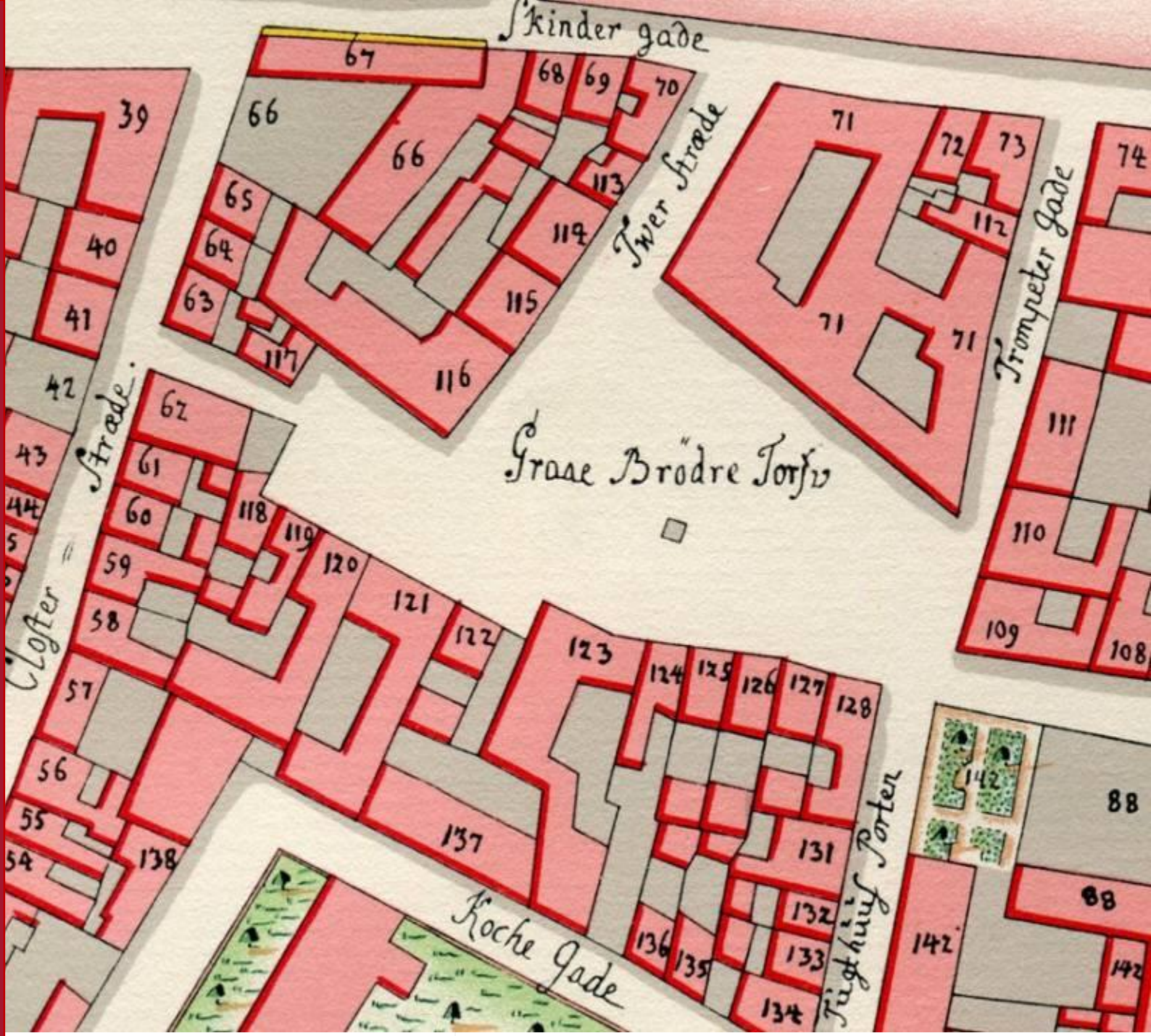
Gråbrødretorv

Slideshow Anders Dernback / English text Wikipedia

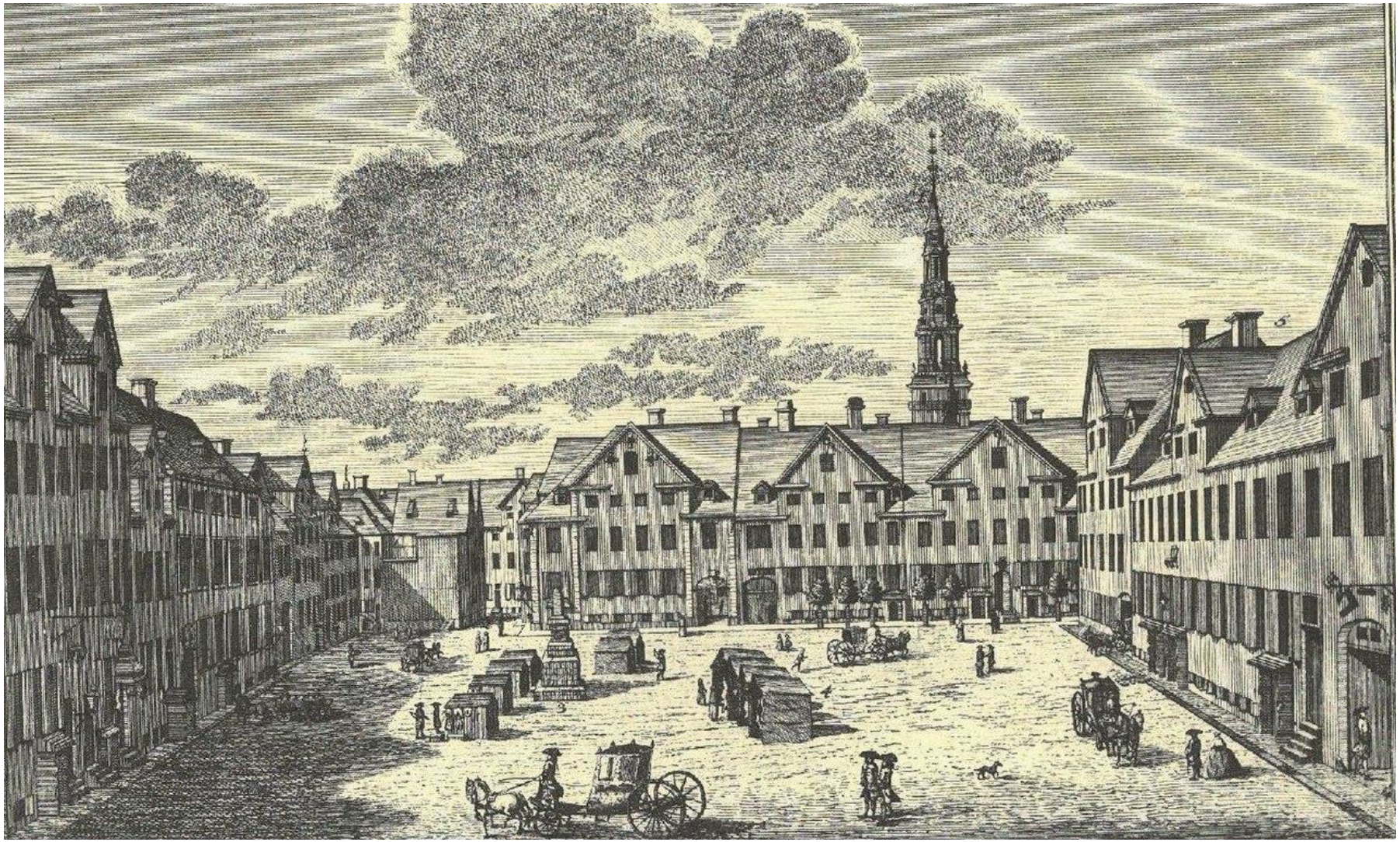
Gråbrødretorv

Ulfeldt's Square in 1748 painting by Johannes Rech

GRÅBRØDRETORV



Gråbrødretorv 1755



Gråbrødretorv

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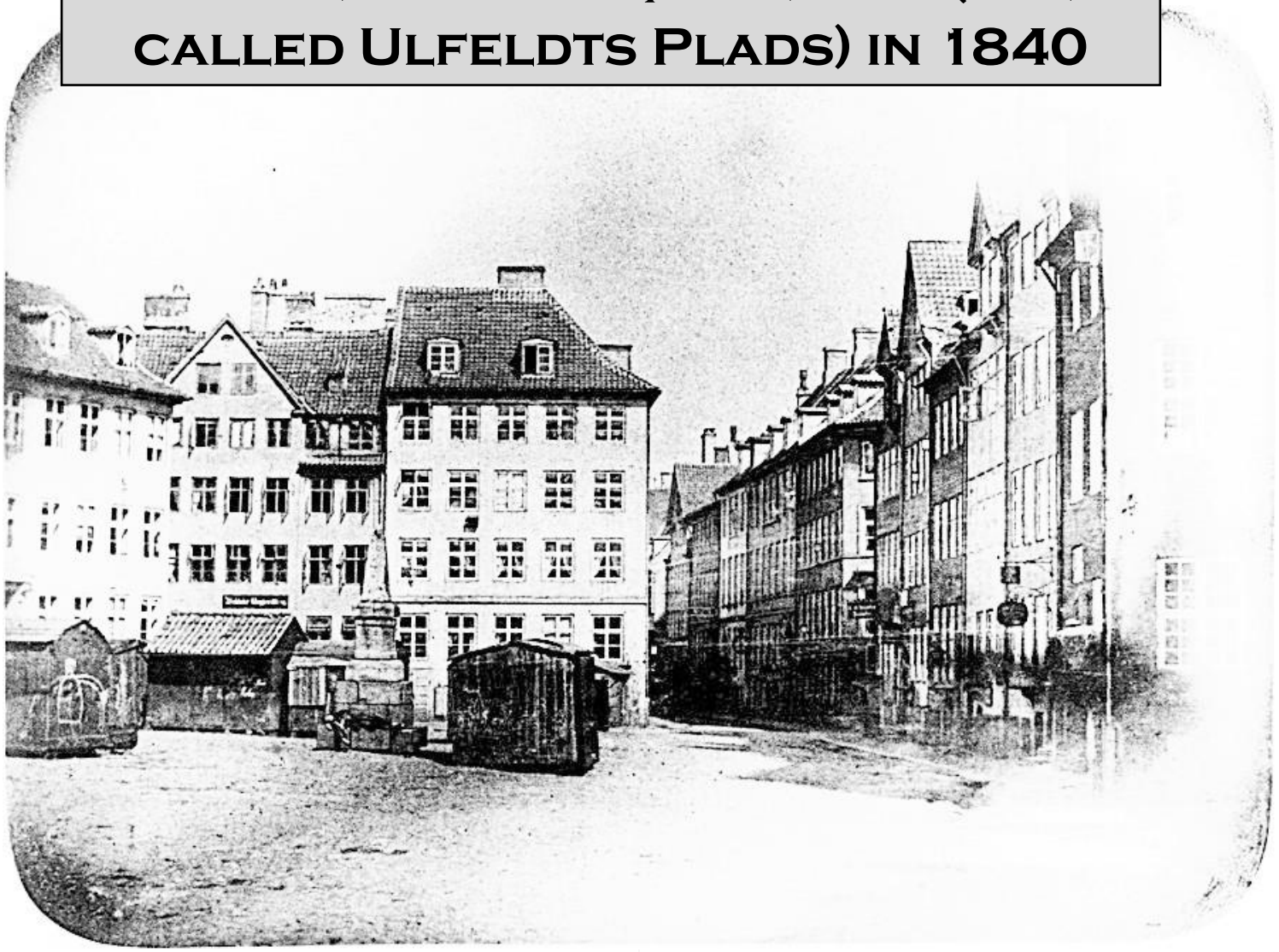
Picture of Gråbrødretorv (then called Ulfeldts Plads) in 1840



Gråbrødretorv

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Gråbrødretorv is a public square in the centre of Copenhagen, Denmark, just off the pedestrian street Strøget. Gråbrødretorv (Greyfriars Square) takes its name from a Franciscan friary, which was established at the site in 1238. The friary consisted at its height of a church, a refectory, a great hall which was used on many occasions for important state meetings and meetings of the provincial which governed Franciscan monasteries in Denmark. The friary was dissolved in 1530 but the church tower was a visible part of the city skyline as late as 1596. The huge cellars of the friary became the town jail and eventually the church itself was converted to a prison. In 1621 Christian IV added an orphanage and recommissioned the church as a house of worship, though it was called the "Prison Church". In the middle of the 17th century, Corfitz Ulfeldt built a mansion at the site and the square became known as Ulfeldts Plads (English: Ulfeldt's Square). The mansion was demolished after his impeachment in 1663 and the subsequent confiscation of his property. Instead a pillar of shame was erected in the square to his disgrace, intended for people to spit on when passing it by.

Gråbrødretorv

At the Copenhagen Fire of 1728 practically all buildings around the square were destroyed. The area was rebuilt, but after the British bombardment of the city during the Battle of Copenhagen in 1807 it saw new devastation but was once again rebuilt.
In 1841 the square received its current name. A market building with room for 20 butchers' stalls was erected in the square in 1852. It was built in cast iron from Frederiksværk. The building was removed in 1901. For many years most of the square was occupied by a bunker surrounded by parking spaces.[3] On 7 June 1968 it became car-free as part of first expansion of the pedestrian zone around Strøget; a number of air raid shelters left over from World War II were removed, as well as parking places. The square has a somewhat hidden location. Niels Hemmingsensgade connects it in opposite directions to Amagertorv and Skindergade, Løvstræde connects it to Købmagergade to the east and Gråbrødrestræde connects it to Klosterstræde to the west. It has a surface area of 3,510 m2

Gråbrødretorv

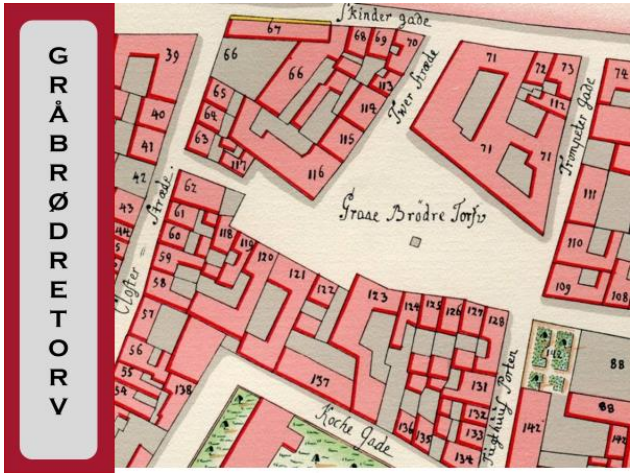
Battle of Copenhagen (1807)

The Second Battle of Copenhagen (or the Bombardment of Copenhagen) (16 August – 5 September 1807) was a British bombardment of the Danish capital, Copenhagen, in order to capture or destroy the Dano-Norwegian fleet during the Napoleonic Wars. The incident led to the outbreak of the Anglo-Russian War of 1807, which ended with the Treaty of Örebro in 1812.

Gråbrødretorv

The buildings on the south side of the square were built in the years after the fire of 1728. No. 8 is the former home of the German Sankt Petri Schule which is now located in Larslejsstræde. The houses on the west side of the square were built after the British bombardment.

No. 8: The former St. Petri School



The Copenhagen Fire 1728

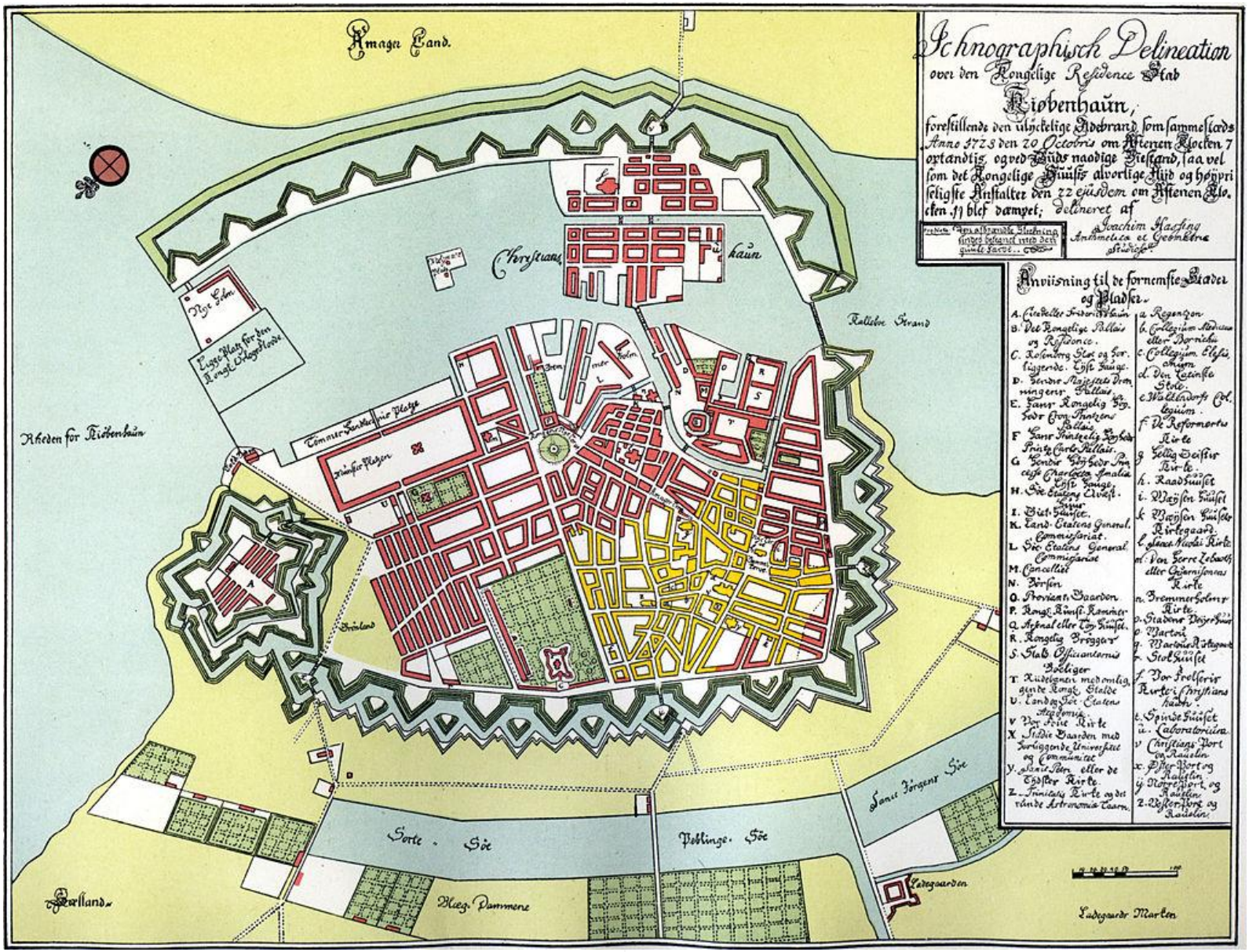
The Copenhagen Fire of 1728 was the largest fire in the history of Copenhagen, Denmark. It began on the evening of 20 October 1728 and continued to burn until the morning of 23 October. It destroyed approximately 28% of the city (measured by counting the number of destroyed lots from the cadastre) and left 20% of the population homeless. The reconstruction lasted until 1737. No less than 47% of the section of the city, which dates back to the Middle Ages, was completely lost, and along with the Copenhagen Fire of 1795, it is the main reason that few traces of medieval Copenhagen can be found in the modern city.

Although the number of dead and wounded was relatively low compared to the extent of the fire, the cultural losses were huge. In addition to several private book collections, 35,000 texts including a large number of unique works were lost with the University of Copenhagen library, and at the observatory on top of Rundetårn, instruments and records made by Tycho Brahe and Ole Rømer were destroyed.

The Copnhagen Fire 1728

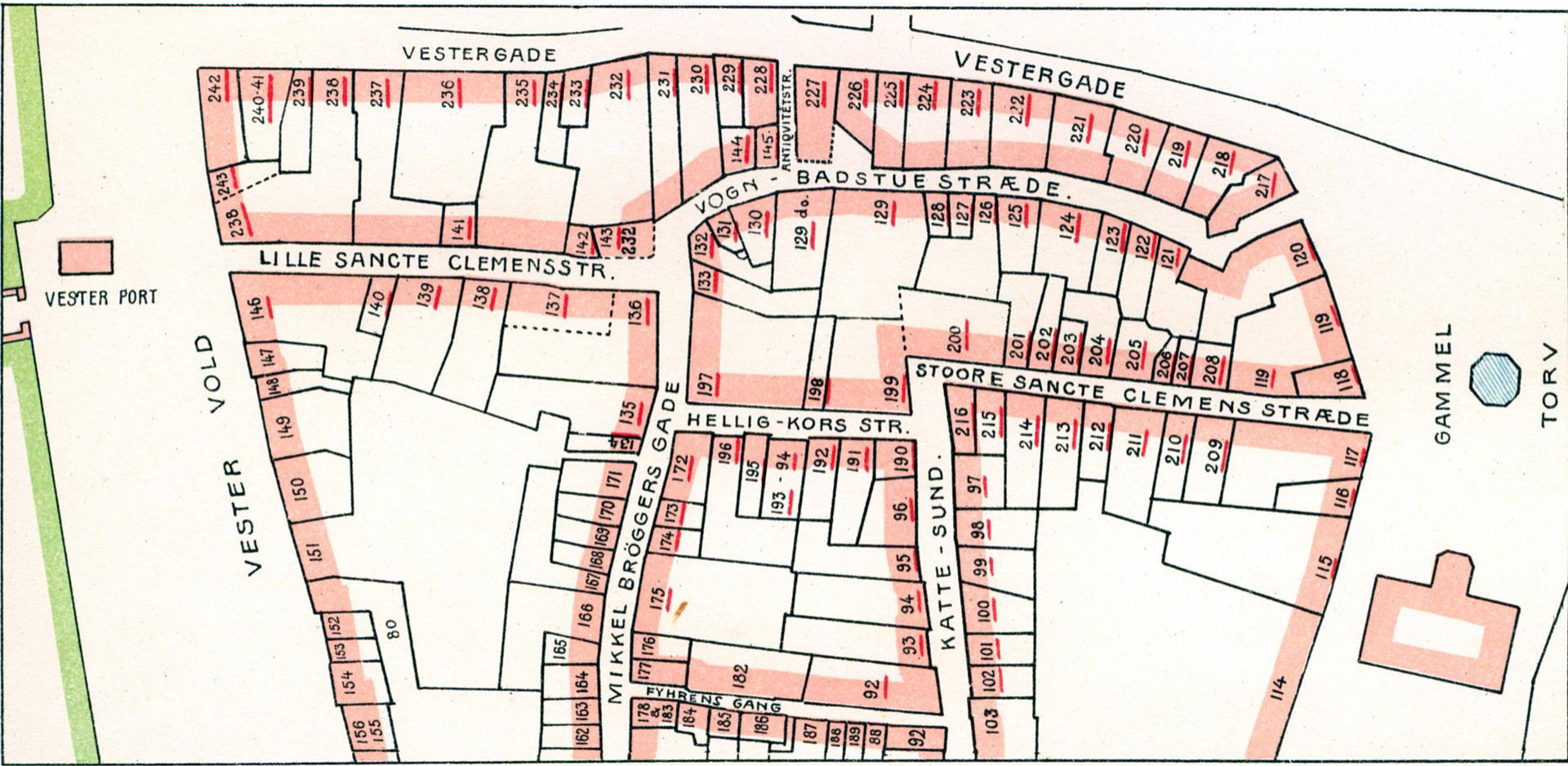
The exact time that the fire started is unknown. Various sources mention times between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m., and 7:30 p.m. is the best estimate. However, the exact location of the origin of the fire is known. Almost directly across the street from Vesterport (the West Gate) was Lille Sankt Clemens Stræde. On the corner facing Vestervold, there was a small house on lot "Vester Kvarter 146" (according to the cadastre of 1699) owned by Signe, widow of Boye Hansen. The lot is almost identical to the one on the corner of present-day Frederiksberggade (the western end of Strøget) and The City Hall Square. Among the widow's tenants were restaurant manager Peder Rasmussen and his wife, Anne Iversdatter. Later that evening, the fire reached Sankt Peders Stræde, where the Valkendorfs Kollegium dormitory (lot "Nørre Kvarter 122") was engulfed in flames. Professor Peder Horrebow, who lived at the dormitory, lost most of his possessions. Presumably simultaneously, the fire also reached Professor Hans Steenbuch's room on Studiestræde (lot "Nørre Kvarter 60"). Around midnight, the fire reached the priest's residence by the church Sankt Petri Kirke. Early Thursday morning, a final desperate attempt to keep the flames from spreading was made at Gammeltorv.

Buildings which burned are shown in yellow on this map of Copenhagen in 1728 by Joachim Hassing.

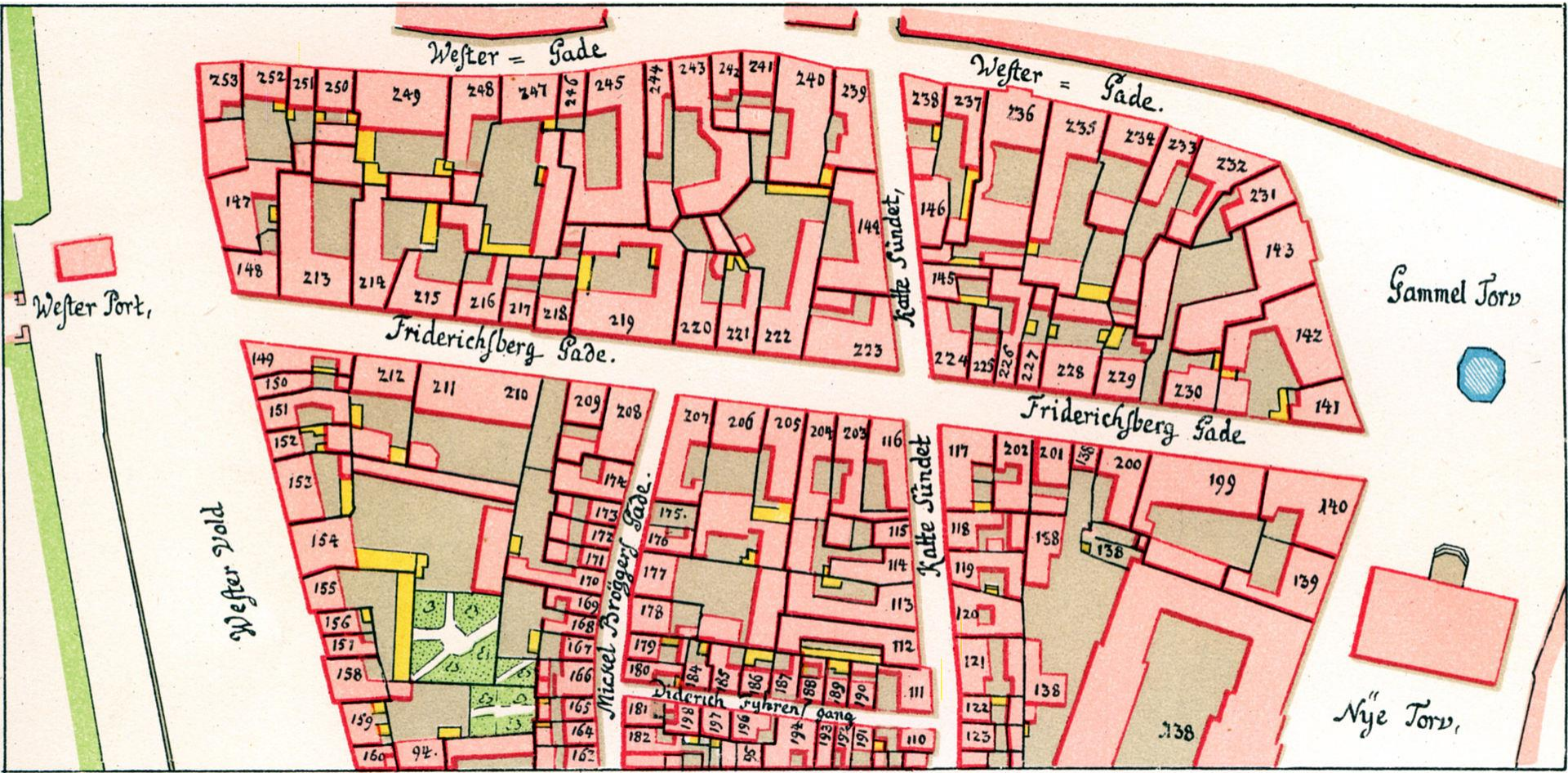


Section of Joachim Hassing's map color-coded to illustrate the approximate progress of the fire, showing the origin of the fire (bright yellow) and the area affected by midnight on Wednesday (dark yellow), by midnight on Thursday (orange), by midnight on Friday (red) and by Saturday (purple).

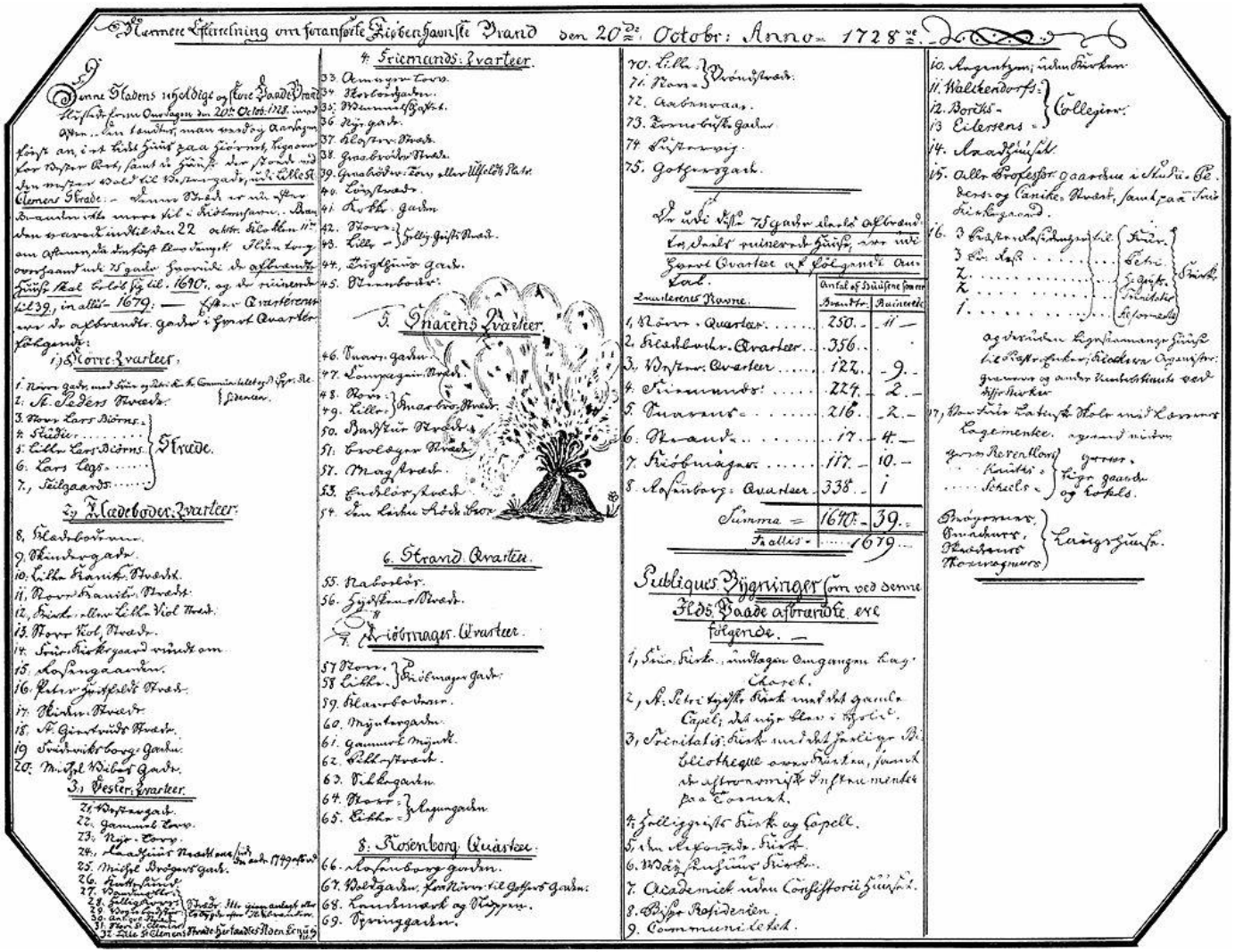
Map of Vester Kvarter where the fire started with the lot numbers from the cadastre of 1699. The numbers of the burned lots are underlined in red.



Map of Vester Kvarter after the fire with new cadastre numbers and streets



Old statistics attached to the back of the map by Joachim Hassing, according to which 1640 houses burned and another 39 were "ruined". The number is probably a bit too high.



Gråbrødretorv

Engelske flåde ud for København august 1807